

National Men's Health Week

June 11–17, 2007

While it is important to promote regular checkups, the sad truth is that most men don't go to the doctor until they realize something is wrong themselves. This tends to be late-stage symptoms when the disease has already progressed (harder to treat). It is important nonetheless to understand what individual symptoms might indicate. Following is a list of typical "Men's Health" diseases and what associated symptoms to be aware of:

Men's Health Network
P.O. Box 75972
Washington, DC 20013
(202) 543-MHN-1 (6461) x101
(202) 543-2727 Fax
info@menshealthweek.org
www.menshealthweek.org

Other sites:

www.menshealthlibrary.com

Provides access to government and private sector publications, reports, and analyses that pertain to health, social science, and gender issues.

www.checkmensfacts.com

Information about health issues like diabetes and high blood pressure which may cause erectile dysfunction:

www.blueprintformenshealth.com

Download a free copy of the **Blueprint for Men's Health** or order a copy.

www.mhnstore.com

MHN produces a variety of educational materials for men and their families. Most of these are available in Spanish.

Prostate Cancer Symptoms

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, but not the most deadly all because of detection.

Most men will not experience any symptoms during earliest stages. This is why Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) tests are so important. Some men, however, will experience symptoms that might indicate the presence of prostate cancer, including:

- A need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine
- Weak or interrupted flow of urine
- Painful or burning urination
- Difficulty in having an erection
- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in urine or semen
- Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs

Testicular Cancer Symptoms

Testicular cancer is the most common type of cancer in men aged 15–35. This cancer is of special concern to young men.

The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a lump, irregularity or swelling in one testicle. Other symptoms that may be present are:

- A pulling sensation or feeling of unusual heaviness in the scrotum
- A dull ache in the groin or lower abdomen
- Pain or discomfort (intermittent or stable) in the testicle or scrotum
- Tenderness or enlargement of tissue in the chest area
- A sudden collection of fluid in the scrotum

Most lumps in the scrotum are not testicular cancer. However, anyone who notices one or more of the symptoms above should see their doctor.

Andropause (Male Menopause) Symptoms

FDA estimates that 4-5 million American men suffer from low testosterone, but only 5% are currently treated. When there is less testosterone available to do its work, the testosterone target-organ response decreases, bringing about many changes.

Because there is great variability in testosterone levels among healthy men, not all men will experience the same changes to the same extent. Symptoms of andropause vary. Here are some of the more common symptoms men report:

- Lethargy or decreased energy
- Decreased sex drive
- Erectile dysfunction with loss of erections
- Muscle weakness and muscle aches

- Inability to sleep
- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Depression
- Infertility
- Thinning of bones or bone loss

High Blood Pressure Symptoms

High Blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure or kidney failure. The only way to know if your blood pressure is high is to get it checked.

Even if high blood pressure does cause symptoms, the symptoms are usually mild and vague. Thus, high blood pressure is often labeled "the silent killer." People who have high blood pressure don't know it until their blood pressure is measured.

- High blood pressure usually has no symptoms

Heart Disease Symptoms

Heart disease is the number one killer of Americans. Reduce your risks, know the signs and get yourself checked. Many people with cardiovascular disease (CVD) do not experience any symptoms of the disease.

- Chest discomfort usually in the center of the chest and feels like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- Upper-body discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweats
- Nausea or light-headedness

Diabetes Symptoms

Approximately 7% of the US population is diabetic. However, nearly one-third of them are unaware that they have the disease.

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst or hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurry vision

Osteopenia (Low Bone Density) Symptoms

All people begin losing bone mass after they reach peak BMD at about 30 years of age. The thicker your bones before that time, the longer it takes to develop osteoporosis. Again, osteopenia is a silent risk factor for bone fractures.

Late stage symptoms include fractures, low back pain, neck pain, bone pain and tenderness, loss of height over time, and a stooped posture.

- There are no symptoms associated with the early stages of osteopenia

Pease note: The Men's Health Network does not provide medical services. Rather, this information is provided to encourage you to begin a knowledgeable dialogue with your physician. Check with your health care provider about your need for specific health screenings.

The Importance of the Pap Test

National Cervical Cancer Coalition

The National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) is spearheading a grass roots campaign to educate the public about cervical cancer prevention and outreach, new screening and treatment options, cervical cancer screening and follow-up programs, HPV, the limitations of the Pap smear AND its overwhelming success as a screening tool for clinicians. The NCCC places a very special and personal focus on providing outreach support to women and family members going through the battle against cancer.

What is a Pap test?

The Pap test (sometimes called a Pap smear) is a way to examine cells collected from the cervix (the lower, narrow end of the uterus). The main purpose of the Pap test is to find abnormal cell changes that may arise from cervical cancer or before cancer develops.

Why are a Pap test and pelvic exam important?

A Pap test and pelvic exam are important parts of a woman's routine health care because they can detect abnormalities that may lead to invasive cancer of the cervix. These abnormalities can be treated before cancer develops. Most invasive cancers of the cervix can be prevented if women have Pap tests regularly. Also, as with many types of cancer, cancer of the cervix is more likely to be treated successfully if it is detected early.

How often should a woman have a Pap test?

Women should talk with their clinician about when and how often they should have a Pap test. Current general guidelines recommend that women have a Pap test at least once every 3 years, beginning about 3 years after they begin to have sexual intercourse, but no later than age 21. Experts recommend waiting about 3 years after the start of sexual activity to avoid overtreatment for common, temporary abnormal changes. It is safe to wait 3 years, because cervical cancer usually develops slowly. Cervical cancer is extremely rare in women under age 25.

Women ages 65 to 70 who have had at least three normal Pap tests and no abnormal Pap tests in the last 10 years may

decide, after talking with their clinician, to stop having Pap tests. Women who have had a hysterectomy (surgery to remove the uterus and cervix) do not need to have a Pap test, unless the surgery was done as a treatment for precancer or cancer.

When should the Pap test be done?

A woman should have this test when she is not menstruating; the best time is between 10 and 20 days after the first day of the last menstrual period. For about 2 days before a Pap test, she should avoid douching or using vaginal medicines or spermicidal foams, creams, or jellies (except as directed by a physician). These may wash away or hide abnormal cells.

How are the results of a Pap test reported?

Most laboratories in the United States use a standard set of terms called the Bethesda System to report test results. Under the Bethesda System, Pap test samples that have no cell abnormalities are reported as "negative for intraepithelial lesion or malignancy." Samples with cell abnormalities are divided into various categories.

How common are Pap test abnormalities?

About 55 million Pap tests are performed each year in the United States. Of these, approximately 3.5 million (6 percent) are abnormal and require medical followup.

What do abnormal results mean?

A physician may simply describe Pap test results to a patient as "abnormal." Cells on the surface of the cervix sometimes appear abnormal but are very rarely cancerous. It is important to remember that abnormal

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If the Pap test shows abnormalities, further tests and/or treatment may be necessary.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the primary risk factor for cervical cancer.



conditions do not always become cancerous, and some conditions are more likely to lead to cancer than others. A woman may want to ask her doctor for specific information about her Pap test result and what the result means.

Is there a vaccine against HPV or cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is primarily caused by the HPV virus (99.7%). So a vaccine stopping HPV would appear to stop cervical cancer. Among the vaccines under development, two of the companies are in Phase III clinical trials (Glaxo & Merck) and appear close to providing data to the FDA. These vaccines focus in on HPV types 16 and 18 which account for 70% of the cervical cancers. For the vaccine to be effective, it is believed that the vaccine should be provided to children prior to their sexual activity (Age 10-12).

There are still some questions surrounding the vaccine with regard to how long the vaccine lasts? When will there need to be a booster vaccine? Should boys as well as girls be vaccinated? Studies indicate the vaccines may be close to 100% effective. Currently up to 80% of women are positive for HPV by age 50. Imagine a vaccine that can dramatically reduce that positive number and virtually eliminate HPV type 16 and 18. The HPV vaccines appear to be the new frontier in the prevention war against cervical cancer. ■

This article from the National Cervical Cancer Coalition has been edited for space. For the full article, please visit: <http://www.nccc-online.org/patient.php?i=21&start=0>

The information contained in this newsletter is meant to raise health awareness and is not intended to replace the advice of your healthcare provider. For more information about USI Midwest, visit us online at <http://cincinnati.usi.biz>



USI Midwest

312 Elm Street, 24th Floor • Cincinnati, OH 45202
Telephone (513) 852-6300 • Fax (513) 852-6424
Toll-Free (877) 778-7469 • <http://cincinnati.usi.biz>